Independent claim 13 is directed to a mounting system including a structure and an adhesive strip for attaching the structure to a substrate wherein the adhesive strip includes a first adhesive region positioned to attach the top portion of the structure to the surface and a second adhesive region positioned to attach the bottom portion of the structure to the substrate, wherein the second adhesive region has reduced adhesive properties.

And independent claim 17 is directed to an adhesive article for attaching a structure to a substrate including and adhesive layer with a first adhesive region adapted to attach a top portion of the structure to the substrate and a second adhesive region with reduced adhesive properties adapted to attach the bottom portion of the structure to the substrate, wherein the adhesive layer is adapted to delaminate from the substrate by reverse peel.

Neither of the cited references taken alone or in combination teach or suggest such an adhesive article. In particular, none of the cited references disclose an adhesive article including a first adhesive region, a second adhesive region with reduced adhesive properties, and a pull tab adjacent the second adhesive region as defined in claim 1, a mounting system including a structure and an adhesive article having a first adhesive region positioned to attach the top portion of the structure to the substrate and a second adhesive region with reduced adhesive properties positioned to attach the bottom portion of the structure to the substrate as defined in claim 13, or an adhesive article including an adhesive layer with a first adhesive region adapted to attach a top portion of a structure to a substrate, and a second adhesive region with reduced adhesive properties adapted to attach a bottom portion of the structure to the substrate, wherein the adhesive layer is adapted to delaminate from the substrate by reverse peel as defined in claim 17.

combination relied upon

The Bries et al. patent U.S. patent No. 6,001,471 discloses a stretchable adhesive tape having a lower adhesion or non-adhesive portion on one adhesive surface so that a corresponding greater adhesion adhesive portion on the other side remains more aggressively adhered to a surface during stretch removal while the portion of the one adhesive surface is less aggressively adhered or completely released from its surface, thereby allowing an object to be removed without risking substantial snap back of the adhesive tape or catapulting of the object.

The adhesive arrangement disclosed by Bries et al., however, is reversed from that of the present invention. That is, the lower adhesion or non-adhesive portion is provided at the end of the adhesive tape opposite the pull tab. During removal, the lower adhesion or non-adhesive portion is the last portion of the adhesive tape to be removed from the associated

no Fiedelberg; so what

Not clear if this is true, and even if it is, so what!

object and/or surface. And when the adhesive tape is used to mount an object on a vertical wall surface, the lower adhesion or non-adhesive portion is adjacent the top of the mounted object.

The present invention, in contrast, provides a second adhesive region with reduced adhesive properties adjacent the pull tab. The second adhesive region is the first region to be removed during the removal process. And when the adhesive article of the present invention is used to attach an object to a surface, the second adhesive region is adjacent the lower end of the object.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made (for claims 1-12) to rearrange the position of the first and second adhesion regions to still be able to facilitate a controlled sequential release of adhesive surfaces, and the tape can be removed without substantially damaging the surface, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art (citing *In re Japiske*). This is erroneous for the following reasons.

First, rearranging the position of the first and second adhesion regions would not facilitate a controlled sequential release of adhesive surfaces. Rather, it would prevent it. In order to achieve controlled sequential release, the adhesive surfaces at the end of adhesive strip during the removal process must be offset. By rearranging the position of the first and second adhesive regions the offset would be eliminated and, consequently, controlled sequential release would be lost.

Second, the Examiner's reliance on *In re Japiske* is misplaced because that case held that claims to a hydraulic power press which read on the prior art except with regard to the position of the starting switch were unpatentable because shifting the position of the starting switch would not have modified the operation of the device. Changing the position of the first and second adhesive regions of the Bries et al. adhesive tape as suggested by the Examiner, however, would significantly alter the operation of the device because it would eliminate controlled sequential release. In addition, such a change would be in conflict with the teaching of the reference to provide a low or non-adhesive region at the end of the adhesive strip. Changing the position of the adhesive regions would therefore be contrary to the purpose of the Bries et al. invention and would alter the essential character of the adhesive tape. Accordingly, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to rearrange the position of the first and second adhesion regions as suggested by the Examiner.

In addition, the Bries et al. adhesive tape and the present invention are directed to solving different problems. Namely, Bries et al. is directed to allowing an object mounted with the adhesive tape to be removed without risking substantial snap back of the adhesive tape or catapulting of the object. The present invention, in contrast, is directed to preventing damage to a wall surface during failure of the adhesive article. This problem was solved by providing a low or non-adhesive region either at the bottom of the adhesive article or, in the case of a stretch releasing adhesive with a pull tab, adjacent to the pull tab.

Moreover, there is no suggestion or motivation, implied or express, to modify the Bries et al. reference in the manner suggested. Rather, the Bries et al. adhesive tape is complete and functional in itself, so there would be no reason to modify it in any manner.

The Luhmann reference has been cited for teaching adhesive strips with reducing adhesive properties toward the end of the strip. Because Luhmann teaches reducing adhesive properties toward the end of the strip, the reference suffers from the same deficiencies as the Bries et al. reference. Accordingly, the teachings of this reference, whether taken alone or in combination with the teaching of Bries et al., in no way render the present invention unpatentable.

Applicant also respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertion that the process of "reverse peel" is inherently the same as the regular "removal tab" and respectfully requests that a reference in support of this assertion be cited. In contrast to this assertion, Applicant notes that both the Bries et al. and Luhmann adhesive tapes are removed by applying a force to the pull tab, thereby causing the tape to stretch. As the tape is stretched, a simultaneous progressive debonding of the adhesive tape from the surfaces of both the object and the wall occurs. (See e.g. Bries et al. col. 7, lines 33-46) Removal occurs in the direction from the region of highest adhesive properties to the region of lowest adhesive properties.

Reverse peel removal, in contrast, refers to the ability to delaminate from a structure in the direction from the region of lowest adhesive properties to the region of highest adhesive properties as shown and described on page 10, lines 25-27 and in Fig. 7 of the present application. Moreover, reverse peel is removal by peeling without stretching and may involve removal of the adhesive tape from either the object or the surface. Thus, the removal mechanism described by Bries et al. and Luhmann is completely different from the "reverse peel" removal of the present invention.

Since neither Bries et al., Luhmann, or any of the remaining cited references discloses, teaches, or suggests an adhesive article as defined in independent claims 1, 13, or 17, these claims are believed to be allowable over the cited references. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. The remaining dependent claims, as depending from allowable claims, are also deemed to be in condition for allowance.

Please charge any fees required to enter this Response/Amendment or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 13-3723.

Respectfully submitted,

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